

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended. Claims 1-18 remain in the application. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

In the following text, specific references to the present application and the prior art are made using the notation "x:y", where "x" denotes the page or column number, and "y" indicates the line number, within the document being discussed.

Currently, claims 1-3 and 5-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 5,901,202 ("Lam"). The applicant respectfully traverses.

Lam discloses a method and device that allow a master phone line testing unit to initiate a telephone call on a remote phone line for the purpose of testing that line (2:36 – 2:38). The Lam device is directly connected to the remote line being tested (3:6 – 3:9), and is connected to the master testing device by way of a Simultaneous Voice and Data (SVD) modem (2:49 – 2:58). The only functionality required of the device in the way of command execution is the ability to go on-hook (4:16 – 4:19) and off-hook (3:30 – 3:33) with respect to the phone lines to which it is connected, to bridge between two phone lines (3:37 – 3:39), and to dial a phone number (4:1 – 4:2). The actual testing of the remote phone line, including the generation of any test signals, is performed by the master test unit (4:6 – 4:15).

As a result, Lam does not anticipate nor make obvious the present invention, which involves a slave test device and method which allows testing of a phone line to be performed by the slave test device at the direction of a master test device, thus allowing the slave to perform tests remotely, in the absence of a local human operator (3:20 – 3:27). The types of commands that the slave device may execute include those that the master test unit would normally execute, such as the sending of electrical test signals (3:22 – 3:25; 9:28 – 10:2; 12:6 – 12:10). Thus, the applicant believes that claims 1 and 11, as amended, are allowable in view of Lam.

Further, the Lam reference indicates that an SVD modem is required for the method and device disclosed in that reference, as the off-hook and on-hook commands are transmitted through the data line provided by the connection with the modem (3:26 – 3:36). No such dedicated data connection is discussed in the specification or claims of the present application.

The applicant believes that since claims 1 and 11 are allowable, claims 2-9 and 12-18 are also allowable in view of the Lam reference, as they depend from and incorporate the limitations of claims 1 and 11, respectively. No discussion is presented in the Lam disclosure of the possibility of the Lam device generating test signals.

Also, regarding the specific rejections of claims 7 and 17, Lam does not appear to teach that the slave test unit (reference 180 of FIG. 2) can be connected to a second slave test unit, but only to a master test unit (reference 110 of FIG. 2). Oppositely, claims 7 and 17 indicate that the test unit situated at a remote location from the slave test unit may be another slave test unit (10:19 – 11:19; FIGS. 5, 6, and 7). Therefore, claims 7 and 17 are again not anticipated by the disclosure in Lam.

Concerning the specific rejection of claim 15, Lam does not allow the passing of commands from master unit to slave unit via a second slave unit. As discussed earlier, communication of any kind between two slaves is not contemplated in the Lam reference. This functionality is the subject matter of claim 15, and is utilized to allow tests to be executed by slave not directly connected with the master test unit (12:10 – 12:12). Thus, claim 15 again is not anticipated by Lam.

Further, concerning the specific rejections of claims 8 and 18, Lam discusses the use of DTMF signals, as generated by a normal telephone set or the master unit, for the purpose of dialing a phone number existing on the remote line connected to the slave unit (3:53 – 3:62). This use of DTMF is different from the use recited in claims 8 and 18, in which DTMF is utilized to encode actual test commands to be executed by the slave test unit (8:24 – 8:26; 12:1 – 12:5). Therefore, Lam does not anticipate the use of DTMF for encoding commands, as stated in the claims of the present application.

The examiner also rejects claims 1, 4, 11, and 13 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by U.S. Patent Number 6,185,191 (“Dipperstein”). The applicant respectfully traverses.

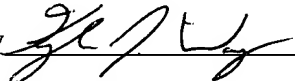
Dipperstein discloses an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) tester used for dry-loop prequalification testing of a two-wire ISDN U interface (2:59 – 2:66), and for testing of a four-wire ISDN S/T interface (3:66 – 4:6). The use of two such disclosed test sets allows one set to be used as a “master” test unit, while the other serves as a “slave” unit (8:6 – 8:14). However, the slave unit is restricted to performing loopback (3:28 – 3:65; 4:27 – 4:40), echo-back (8:16 – 8:24), and callback (8:32 – 8:37) functions. Dipperstein does not

disclose a slave test unit which receives commands from a master unit which cause the slave unit to execute commands normally associated with the master, such as the generation of test signals, as recited in amended claims 1 and 11 of the present application. Thus, claims 1 and 11, as amended, are believed allowable in view of Dipperstein. Also, since claims 4 and 13 (dealing specifically with loopback commands) depend from and incorporate the limitations of claims 1 and 11, respectively, claims 4 and 13 are also believed allowable, as well as all other claims which depend from claims 1 and 11, in view of Dipperstein.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made.**"

As a result of the discussion above, it is believed that claims 1-18 comply with the provisions of 35 USC 102 and 103. Reconsideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

by 

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the specification:

No amendments to the specifications were requested herein.

In the claims:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A slave test unit for testing voice signal quality over phone connections, comprising:

at least two phone line connectors attached to separate phone lines;

means for transmitting and receiving electrical signals via the phone line connectors, the electrical signals being transmitted and received between the slave test unit and at least one remote test unit, the electrical signals received from the at least one remote test unit comprising test commands;

means for decoding the test commands from the electrical signals received from the at least one remote test unit, and;

means for executing the test commands, the executing means including the ability to generate test signals;

whereby the test commands executed by the slave test unit are received exclusively from the at least one remote test unit.

Claim 11 has been amended as follows:

11. (Amended) A method for testing voice signal quality over phone connections, comprising the steps of:

establishing at least one phone connection, whereby each of the at least one phone connections is made with a separate remote test unit;

receiving electrical signals, the electrical signals being received from the remote test units associated with the at least one phone connections, the electrical signals comprising test commands;

decoding the test commands from the electrical signals being received from the remote test units; and

executing the test commands, the executing step including the ability to generate test signals, the test commands being received exclusively from the remote test units.